



THE HANUKKAH TRIKE

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Gabi is thrilled to receive a new tricycle as a Hanukkah gift. After falling off the trike and scraping her hands and knees, she's afraid to try again, but finds courage by remembering the bravery of the Maccabees.

As adults we may sometimes wonder about the relevance of stories from ancient times. What meaning does the Hebrews' Exodus from Egypt or the battles of the Maccabees have for us? The *Hanukkah Trike* reminds us of the importance of perseverance and courage: just as Mattathias, his five sons and their cohort looked the overwhelming army of Antiochus in the eye, our children face battles every day.

The Hanukkah Trike teaches us that winning little battles prepares us for larger ones: the little girl who today summons the courage to get back on a tricycle will tomorrow go by herself to kindergarten, swim in the deep end of the pool, and make increasingly important life choices. The boy who sleeps through the night in his own bed tonight will tomorrow summon the courage to go to sleep-away camp and tell the truth when it's most difficult. Celebrate everyday victories with your children. Post a list—in words and pictures—that commemorates your little ones' achievements. You might also have a regular time—perhaps at dinner on Friday evening, as *Shabbat* begins—to talk about and compliment your children on the week's experiences that deserve your recognition and praise.

HANUKKAH GIFTS

Gift giving is not traditionally a major part of celebrating *Hanukkah*. Many families have adopted this custom, however, probably because *Hanukkah* often coincides with the Christmas season.

As your family develops its own *Hanukkah* traditions, there are many options in addition to or in place of giving conventional gifts. Designating each night for something special that the family does together is a lovely way of elevating *Hanukkah* from a holiday that can seem focused on presents to a time of greater significance. One evening might be for having friends or family over, another for having a make-your-own pizza dinner, baking cookies or lighting candles with Jewish seniors at a nursing home. Your family might create a large paper *hanukkiah* (a nine-branched *Hanukkah* meorah), and on each candle illustrate the special event of the evening.

* The transliterated word *Hanukkah* can be spelled in many different ways—including *Chanukah*, *Channukah*, *Chanuka*, etc. Pj